

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
June 22-23, 2000 – Sturgeon Bay

Notes

(prepared by Bill Horns, June 26, 2000)

Present: Jim Moore, Mike Toney, Ron Fassbender, Dick Rebicek, Matt Coffaro, Lee Meyers, Terry Lychwick, Steve Hogler, Randy Link, Mark Opgenorth, Dave Weber, Charlie Verhoeven, Paul Peeters, George Boronow, Bill Horns, Pradeep Hirethota, Pete Flaherty, Tom Hansen, Al Kaas, Steve Hewett

Next Meeting: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, August 9, Deland Center, Sheboygan.

This is a summary of decisions, recommendations, and planned actions, and is not intended as a review of all topics discussed or reviewed at the meeting.

- 1) The Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board has recommended extending the Zone 3 whitefish trap net season and changing the Zone 2 whitefish trap net boundaries to include Whitefish Bay. The LMFT felt that these are primarily user-conflict issues, not biological issues. We discussed possible courses of action, but made no final recommendations. The discussion revealed a need to develop some internal guidelines for handling LMCFB recommendations. The LMFT recommended the following course of action: a) I will respond in writing to the LMCFB, with a copy to the Natural Resources Board, stating that we have held a preliminary discussion of the two proposals. b) I will place the issues before the Lake Michigan Partnership Team for comment. c) I will work with Pete Flaherty to draft a LMFT policy for the handling of LMCFB recommendations. d) The recommendations and the draft LMFT policy will be discussed further at the next LMFT meeting.
- 2) We discussed the proposal developed by Mark Opgenorth to provide supplemental water to the Strawberry Creek pond. The LMFT endorsed the project proposal, which has since been described in a "Development Project Request" form, approved by Charlie Verhoeven, and forwarded to Mike Staggs with a short cover note from me indicating LMFT support for the project.
- 3) The Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board has asked us to consider increasing the white perch harvest limit increase in Green Bay. The LMFT recommended that I draft a letter to the LMCFB (copy to NRB) stating that the LMFT does not support the recommendation at this time. Our concerns include the likely incidental harvest of yellow perch in a targeted white perch fishery of sufficient size to effect the white perch population. The LMFT is willing to re-consider the matter if it could be shown that there is or will be a market (including, possibly, a commitment by someone to subsidize the disposal of harvested white perch) for the white perch.
- 4) 2001-2002 production plan.
 - a) The LMFT endorsed Team Steelhead's proposal regarding the use of the Firehole strain rainbow trout. The 2001-2002 production plan will include 60,000 of these fish. Randy Link will make the preliminary written contact with the Wyoming hatchery where the brood stock is held. The stocking of this strain in Lake

- Michigan will require consultation with other Great Lakes states through the Council of Lake Committees.
- b) The LMFT discussed whether Wisconsin should continue to stock brook trout in addition to the additional 60,000 rainbow trout. Brook trout will be included in production quota requests for 2001-2002, but a final decision on stocking has not been made. Brook trout stocking will be discussed again at the next LMFT meeting so that a final LMFT recommendation can be carried to the Production Meeting in mid August.
 - c) The next LMFT meeting will also provide an opportunity to discuss review brown trout stocking requests prior to the Production Meeting.
- 5) Lake Michigan Partnership Team.
- a) The LMFT recommended asking the following ten additional individuals if they would be willing to participate on the team. Note, this would bring the list of voting participants up to 17, because seven participants have already been designated by selected groups. The LMPT charter calls for 15 members, but the LMFT feels that the larger number is needed in order to include a reasonable reflection of the diversity in both the sport and commercial fishing communities.
 - i) Additional commercial fishers: Danny Anderson, Mike LeClair, Charlie Henriksen
 - ii) Stream fisher: Jim Folda (SE Chapter, TU)
 - iii) Environmental group: Jerry Viste (Door County Stewardship Council)
 - iv) Bait and tackle store operator: Roger Stack (The Fishing Hole, Milwaukee)
 - v) Business or industry: John Reinke (Stephenson National Bank and Trust, Marinette)
 - vi) Other sport fishers: Bill Willis, Mike Collins, Lee Haasch.
 - b) The LMFT also discussed Department participation on the LMPT. I think I was responsible for a little confusion on this point because I had forgotten exactly what the LMPT charter says. The approved LMPT charter calls for three non-voting members representing the LMFT, in addition to a Department facilitator. Paul Peeters and Lee Meyers expressed interest in participating. I suggested Brad Eggold, for the SER perspective. My recommendation now is that Paul Peeters, Brad Eggold, and Lee Meyers represent the LMFT, with me serving as the Department-designated facilitator. I will use a conference-call meeting of the Policy Committee to ask for confirmation of this as the LMFT recommendation.
- 6) Surface gill nets. The Conservation Congress advanced an advisory question this year regarding the banning of floating or drifting gill nets in Wisconsin waters. The concern with floating or drifting nets is that small boats could become entangled in them, endangering the small-boat operators. Tom Hansen reviewed this issue earlier this year. Because the only floating gill nets now in use are suspended several feet beneath the surface they probably pose little risk to boaters. However, the LMFT thought it might be possible to honor the intent of the advisory question and reassure its sponsors by setting a minimum depth for suspended gill nets. I will consult with our biologists on Lake Superior and attempt to outline a possible rule proposal for discussion at our next meeting.
- 7) Surplus fish policy. The LMFT discussed the perennial issue of disposition of salmon or trout in excess of stocking quotas. Over the next several months, Al Kaas will

work with us to develop policies and hatchery protocols to help with this. Two steps will be taken prior to our next meeting: a) Al will feed us questions that hatchery managers need to have answered. b) I will raise this at the summer meeting of the Lake Michigan Committee.

- 8) Charter fishing investigation. We discussed the recent investigation of reporting violations by charter captains and reaffirmed the importance of accurate reporting of charter boat catches. The investigation has been highly controversial, but needed. Later this summer LE will initiate discussions with charter captains and fisheries staff and develop a rule to address the underlying problem.
- 9) Lake Michigan staffing. We had a good airing of thoughts about staffing of Lake Michigan fisheries work.
- 10) Revisions to LMFT Team Charge. The LMFT reviewed the LMFT Team Charge and suggested changes to reflect retirements and appointments since the Charge was first adopted. I will prepare a revised charge, reflecting the personnel changes, and circulate it to all concerned.
- 11) Following a discussion of public concerns (Kevin Naze, especially) about Lake Michigan coverage in the Department's outdoor reports, Steve Hewett agreed to take the lead in reviewing the statewide process for generating those reports.
- 12) The LMFT established Team Musky to develop a proposal for sustaining and expanding the Great Lakes spotted musky program. Terry Lychwick will head the Team, with participation by Mark Opgenorth, Steve Fajfer, Justine Newby, and Mike Toneys. Ron Bruch will be asked to participate.
- 13) Concerns regarding USFWS lake trout screening practices. I agreed to talk with Sue Marcquenski about having someone from the Fish Health Committee attend the summer Lake Michigan Committee meeting to discuss concerns about USFWS policy and practices regarding BKD screening and the stocking of lake trout. Sue has agreed to also prepare a memo reflecting her perspective on this issue.
- 14) Lake Superior News. I agree to ask Steve Schram to put everyone on the LMFT on his mailing list for Lake Superior News.
- 15) We will discuss the DOA Fiscal Bureau tour of NER (scheduled for Sept. 11-13) at our next LMFT meeting.